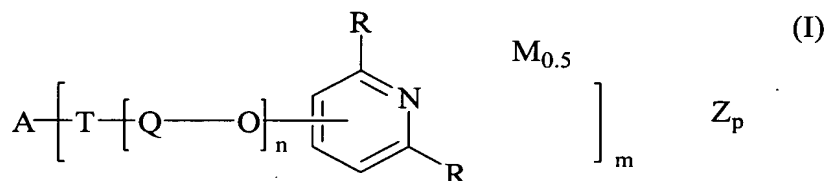


IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-9 (Canceled).

Claim 10 (New): A polymer of transition-metal-bridged units of the formula (1)



where

A is an m-valent organic radical,

T independently of one another are O or NH,

Q independently of one another are $\text{CHR}^1\text{-CH}_2$ where R^1 is H or optionally substituted C_{1-6} -alkyl,

R independently of one another are H, 2-pyridyl, 2-imidazolynyl, 2-imidazolyl, 2-thiazolynyl, 2-thiazolyl, 2-pyridazyl, 2-pyrimidyl, carboxyl, carboxylic ester radical, carboxamide radical, carboxylate, phosphonate, where at least one of the radicals R is different from H,

M is Fe^{2+} , Fe^{3+} , Co^{2+} , Co^{3+} , Zn^{2+} , Ru^{2+} , Os^{2+} , Ni^{2+} ,

Z is SO_4^{2-} , CH_3OO^- , BF_4^- , SF_6^- , Cl^- , I^- , PF_6^- , perchlorate,

n is 1 to 10,000,

m is 2 to 100,

p is a number which corresponds to the charge balance within the polymer,

where the average molecular weight of the polymer is at least 30,000.

Claim 11 (New): A polymer as claimed in claim 10, wherein A is derived from polyols, polyamines, polyalkanolamines, polyethyleneimines, polyvinylamine and alkoxylates thereof.

Claim 12 (New): A polymer as claimed in claim 10, wherein R is in each case 2-pyridyl.

Claim 13 (New): A polymer as claimed in claim 10, wherein Q is $\text{CHR}^1\text{-CH}_2$ where R^1 is H or methyl.

Claim 14 (New): A process for the preparation of polymers as claimed in claim 10, which comprises introducing non-transition-metal-bridged units of the formula (I), whose charge is balanced by counterions Z, into a solvent, and then reacting them with salts of the metals M with mixing, where the rate of addition of the metal salts is at least 1 mol/s.

Claim 15 (New): A process as claimed in claim 14, wherein the concentration of the units of the formula (I) in the solvent prior to the reaction with the metal salts is at least 3% by weight, based on the total solution.

Claim 16 (New): A method of increasing the viscosity of liquids comprising adding the polymer as claimed in claim 10 to a liquid.

Claim 17 (New): The method as claimed in claim 16 for simultaneously imparting color to the liquid.

Claim 18 (New): A method of controlling the viscosity of the polymer as claimed in claim 10 for use as switchable gelling agents comprising controlling the viscosity of the polymer by the addition of complexing agents for the metals M.